

Come Follow Me Lesson 29
Alma 36-38 Jul 20-26

Alma 36

*The commandments of Alma to his son Helaman. (The first sentence was part of the original text.)
Comprising chapters 36 and 37.*

Alma testifies to Helaman of his conversion by an angel—He suffered the pains of a damned soul; he called upon the name of Jesus, and was then born of God—Sweet joy filled his soul—He saw concourses of angels praising God—His converts have tasted and seen as he did. [About 73 B.C.] (The entire chapter is a chiasm.)

[A]1 MY ^ason, give ear to my words; for I swear unto you, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land.

[B]2 I would that ye should do as I have done, in remembering the captivity of our fathers; for they were in ^abondage, (We are all in bondage to sin, no matter how small the sin.) and none could ^bdeliver them except it was the ^cGod of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he surely did deliver them in their afflictions.

[C]3 And now, O my son Helaman, behold, thou art in thy youth, and therefore, I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me; for I do know that whosoever shall put their ^atrust in God shall be supported in their ^btrials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be ^clifted up at the last day. (John Taylor said: “There are many things that seem to us trials and difficulties, that perplex, annoy, and harass our spirits; yet these very things, as one justly observed, are blessings in disguise, so many helps to us to develop our weaknesses and infirmities, and lead us to put our trust in God, and rely upon Him to give us a knowledge of ourselves, of our neighbors, and of the work of God; they have a tendency to develop principles of worth to our minds, and thus they serve as schoolmasters, helps, and instructors, and are to us as many blessings in disguise. In fact all things that we have to do with in the world, whether they are adversity or prosperity, whether they relate to ourselves or to others, if rightly appreciated and understood, may teach us a lesson that will be to our joy, probably not only in time, but in all eternity.” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 366) Otten/Caldwell: We note that the prophet did not make promises in case we have trials, but rather when we do. We need not wonder why the Lord doesn’t prevent our troubles from occurring, or whether He actually causes our trials and tribulations. While we bring many afflictions upon ourselves by committing sin, most afflictions are simply hazards of mortality and cannot be avoided. Saints who wonder why the Lord doesn’t protect His people from suffering must realize that the Lord’s purpose is to prepare people for problems instead of preventing those problems. In other words, we would have the Lord remove our burdens instead He increases our capacity to carry them. *Unlocking the Book of Mormon*, 298)

[D]4 And I would not that ye think that I ^aknow of myself—not of the temporal but of the spiritual, not of the ^bcarnal mind but of God. (To restate this phrase, the more modern meaning might be “I would not that ye think that I know by study – not of the temporal learning, but rather of the spiritual learning, not from the learning of man, but the mind/teaching of God.” Brant Gardner.)

5 Now, behold, I say unto you, if I had not been ^aborn of God I should ^bnot have known these things; but God has, by the mouth of his holy ^cangel, made these things known unto me, not of any ^dworthiness of myself; (Alma knew that he was not worthy of such a ministration.)

[E]6 For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to ^adestroy the church of God (We confess our sins at the level they were committed. If we sin openly and it is known to a wide group, then we are to confess openly. If our sins are known to no one, then we confess to the Lord and to the person injured.); but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop us by the way.

7 And behold, he spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did ^atremble beneath our feet; and we all fell to the earth, for the ^bfear of the Lord came upon us.

8 But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

9 And he said unto me: If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God.

[F]10 And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of ^athree days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs.

11 And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did ^anot hear them; for when I heard the words—If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God—I was struck with such great fear and amazement lest perhaps I should be destroyed, that I fell to the earth and I did hear no more.

12 But I was racked with ^aeternal ^btorment, for my soul was ^charrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

13 Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities (In the day of judgment, the wicked will have a perfect knowledge of all their sins.), for which I was ^atormented with the ^bpains of hell; yea, I saw that I had ^crebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

[G]14 Yea, and I had ^amurdered (Alma was so concerned that he may have caused people to forever be removed from the grace of God, that he considered it to be murder, or better stated, spiritual murder, killing them spiritually.) many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

15 Oh, thought I, that I ^acould be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my ^bdeeds.

[H]16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the ^apains of a ^bdamned soul. (Alma tasted only a portion of that pain spoken of. The scriptures are clear that no one fully understands unless they have experienced it. Thus, those who have seen this torment in vision still don't know the height, the depth, and the misery thereof. The early missionaries in England were shown what it would be like for the damned souls of hell when they witnessed a brief vision of the evil spirits which had joined forces to destroy the work. Heber C. Kimball gives a brief but vivid description of what he saw: "We could distinctly see the evil spirits, who foamed and gnashed their teeth at us. We gazed upon them about an hour and a half (by Willard [Richards's] watch)... We saw the devils coming in legions, with their leaders, who came within a few feet of us. They came towards us like armies rushing to battle. They appeared to be men of full stature, possessing every form and feature of men in the flesh, who were angry and desperate; and I shall never forget the vindictive malignity depicted on their countenances as they looked me in the eye; and any attempt to paint the scene which then presented itself, or portray their malice and enmity, would be vain. I perspired exceedingly, my clothes becoming as wet as if I had been taken out of the river. I felt excessive pain, and was in the greatest distress for some time. I cannot even look back on the scene without feelings of horror; yet by it I learned the power of the adversary, his enmity against the servants of God and got some understanding of the invisible world. We distinctly heard those spirits talk and express their wrath and hellish designs against us. However, the Lord delivered us from them, and blessed us exceedingly that day." (*Heroes of the Restoration*, p. 64-5))

[I]17 And it came to pass that as I was thus ^aracked with torment, while I was ^bharrowed up by the ^cmemory of my many sins, behold, I ^dremembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world. (It is only through Christ's atonement that we can be saved. This is the center of the chiasmus. Christ is the Son of God. The prophets teach how painful guilt can be... The prophet Alma, describing his feelings of guilt, said, "I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins." The prophets chose very graphic words. Racked means "tortured." Anciently a rack was a framework on which the victim was laid with each ankle and wrist tied to a spindle which

could then be turned to cause unbearable pain. A harrow is a frame with spikes through it. When pulled across the ground, it rips and tears into the soil. The scriptures frequently speak of souls and minds being harrowed up with guilt. Torment means “to twist,” a means of torturing so painful that even the innocent would confess. Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, May 2001, 22-23)

[I] 18 Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, ^ahave mercy on me, who am ^bin the ^cgall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting ^dchains of ^edeath. (Hugh Nibley said: “There could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains.... On the other hand there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy.” Perfect parallelism. And incidentally, when he says, ‘O Jesus,’ (v. 18) any Moslem or Jew would say, ‘Well, why not call on God directly? Why call on Jesus?’ Well, that’s the point of the whole thing. It was God he had offended. The last person in the world he wants to meet is God. He has offended God. What he wants is a kind person who will feel with him and know what he is going through. And, of course, that’s the Lord, that’s Christ. He descended below all things. He suffered all these things, so he knows. Alma appeals to the one he can appeal to. He’s scared; he doesn’t want to go to God. I’d sooner be extinct than have to face him [he feels]. But there is Jesus; he will get me out. He is the Savior—he knows. So he appeals to him, and then his work is really beginning.” (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, lecture 56, p. 458))

[H] 19 And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my ^apains ^bno more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more. (He is forgiven, but that is only the beginning of the salvation process.)

20 And oh, what ^ajoy, (Joy is the fruit of the presence of the Holy Ghost.) and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain! (This is the center of the chiasm.)

21 Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy. (The teachings and testimonies of parents and other good people have an inevitable, inexorable effect. Those lessons are not lost on even the most wayward soul. Somewhere, somehow, they get recorded in the soul and may be called upon in a great moment of need. It was in such a moment that the young Alma remembered also to have heard my father prophesy. That prophecy may have been uttered in a day when Alma was taunting his father, or jeering at those who believed, or willfully denying the reality of revelation. It may have come at a time when his father assumed Alma did not care or hear or understand. Or it may have come so early in his life that his father might have thought he had forgotten... Now it was being called forth for the very protection it had intended to give... There will always be a great power – even latent, delayed, residual power – in the words of God we utter. Jeffrey R. Holland, *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family*, 97-98)

[G] 22 Yea, me thought I saw, even as our father ^aLehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and ^bpraising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there. (Alma must have read the plates of Nephi where this story was written because he quotes from it.)

[F] 23 But behold, my limbs did receive their ^astrength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did manifest unto the people that I had been ^bborn of God. (“Alma’s story is preserved in the scriptures because it is unusual and powerful. For virtually everyone in Alma’s day and ours, the process of being born again is quiet and unobtrusive, yet all conversion experiences ought to contain certain elements in common. ‘We must be cautious,’ President Ezra Taft Benson has warned, ‘as we discuss these remarkable examples. Though they are real and powerful, they are the exception more than the rule. For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life.’ (“A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, October 1989, p. 5.)” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 268))

[E]24 Yea, and from that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto ^arepentance; that I might bring them to ^btaste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste; that they might also be ^cborn of God, and be ^dfilled with the Holy Ghost.

25 Yea, and now behold, O my son, the Lord doth ^agive me exceedingly great joy in the fruit of my ^blabors;

[D]26 For because of the ^aword which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have ^btasted as I have tasted (*“This is good doctrine. It tastes good. You say honey is sweet and so do I. I can also taste the spirit and principles of eternal life, and so can you. I know it is good and that when I tell you of these words of eternal life that are given to me by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the revelations of Jesus Christ, you are bound to receive them as sweet. You taste them and I know you believe them. I rejoice more and more.”* ^cThe King Follett Discourse: a Newly Amalgamated Text by Stan Larson, *BYU Studies*, vol. 18 (1977-1978), Number 2 - Winter 1978 204.), and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God.

[C]27 And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind, yea, and in all manner of afflictions; yea, God has ^adelivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death; yea, and I do put my trust in him, and he will still ^bdeliver me. (God never bestows upon his people, or upon an individual, superior blessings without a severe trial to prove them, to prove that individual, or that people, to see whether they will keep their covenants with him, and keep in remembrance what he has shown them. Then the greater the vision, the greater the display of the power of the enemy. So when individuals are blessed with visions, revelations, and great manifestations, look out, then the Devil is nigh you, and you will be tempted in proportion to the visions, revelations, or manifestation you have received. Discourses of Brigham Young, 338)

[B]28 And I know that he will ^araise me up at the last day (calling and election made sure), to dwell with him in ^bglory; yea, and I will ^cpraise him forever, for he has ^dbrought our fathers out of Egypt, and he has swallowed up the ^eEgyptians in the Red Sea; and he led them by his power into the promised land; yea, and he has delivered them out of bondage and captivity from time to time.

29 Yea, and he has also brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem; and he has also, by his everlasting power, delivered them out of ^abondage and captivity, from time to time even down to the present day; and I have always retained in remembrance their captivity; yea, and ye also ought to retain in remembrance, as I have done, their captivity.

[A]30 But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that ^ainasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall ^bprosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. Now this is according to his word.

Alma 37

The commandments of Alma to his son Helaman. (The first sentence was part of the original text.)
Comprising chapters 36 and 37.

The plates of brass and other scriptures are preserved to bring souls to salvation—The Jaredites were destroyed because of their wickedness—Their secret oaths and covenants must be kept from the people—Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings—As the Liahona guided the Nephites, so the word of Christ leads men to eternal life. [About 73 B.C.]

1 AND now, my son Helaman, I command you that ye take the ^arecords which have been ^bentrusted with me; (*“We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon but also the brass plates, the plates of the Book of Ether, the plates containing the records of the wickedness and secret combinations of the people*

of the world down to the time of their being engraved, and many other plates ... there appeared as it were, a table with many records or plates upon it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the Sword of Laban, the Directors i.e., the ball which Lehi had-and the Interpreters [Urim and Thummim]. I saw them just as plain as I see this bed (striking the bed beside him with his hand), and I heard the voice of the Lord, as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God.” (1878 interview between Orson Pratt and David Whitmer, recorded in *Book of Mormon Compendium*, pp. 55-56))

PREACH MY GOSPEL: THE BOOK OF MORMON TESTIFIES OF CHRIST: WHAT REASONS DID THE BOOK OF MORMON PROPHETS GIVE FOR WRITING THEIR RECORDS? 1 Nephi 6:4-6; 1 Nephi 9:3-5; 2 Nephi 4:15-16; 2 Nephi 25:23-29; 2 Nephi 26:15-16; 2 Nephi 29:11-14; 2 Nephi 33:13-15; Jacob 1:4-7; Jacob 4:1-6, 12; Enos 1:13; Jarom 1:2; Omni 1:25-26; Words of Mormon 1:3-8; Alma 37:2, 14; 3 Nephi 5:14-15; Mormon 8:35; D&C 3:16-20; D&C 10:46-48.

2 And I also command you that ye keep a ^arecord of this people, according as I have done, upon the plates of Nephi, and keep all these things sacred which I have kept, even as I have kept them; for it is for a ^bwise purpose that they are kept.

3 And these ^aplates of brass, which contain these engravings, which have the records of the holy scriptures upon them, which have the ^bgenealogy of our forefathers, even from the beginning—

4 Behold, it has been prophesied by our fathers, that they (the brass plates) should be kept and ^ahanded down from one generation to another, and be kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord until they should go forth unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, that they shall know of the ^bmysteries contained thereon. (“Does anyone think we have all of the words of Isaiah or Jeremiah or Malachi? And are there not prophets and apostles without number, whose names we do not even know, who have recorded their teachings and testimonies? The perfected Bible of the future will surely include all that was on the brass plates of Laban. Indeed, Lehi prophesied ‘that these plates of brass should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who were of his seed. Wherefore, he said that these plates of brass should never perish; neither should they be dimmed any more by time.’ (1 Nephi 5:18–19.) More than five hundred years later Alma testified that they should ‘be kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord until they should go forth unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, that they shall know of the mysteries contained thereon,’ and that they would ‘retain their brightness.’ (Alma 37:4–5.) Someday the Lord will raise up a prophet, who will also be a seer and a translator, to whom he will give the brass plates that they may be translated for the benefit and blessing of those in all nations. Would God that the work might commence at least in our day, though in fact we have no such hope. Why should the Lord give us what is on the brass plates or in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon when we do not even treasure up and live by what he has already given us?” (Monte Nyman & Robert Millet, *The Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things*, p. 15-6))

5 And now behold, if they are kept they must retain their brightness (We must take care of our scriptures); yea, and they will retain their brightness; yea, and also shall all the plates which do contain that which is holy writ.

SCRIPTURE MASTERY 6 Now ye may suppose that this is ^afoolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by ^bsmall and simple things are great things brought to pass (It’s the small things that are the big things); and small means in many instances doth confound the wise. (You can put it down in your little black book that if you will not be loyal in the small things, you will not be loyal in the large things. If you will not respond to the so-called insignificant or menial tasks which need to be performed in the Church and Kingdom, there will be no opportunity for service in the so-called greater challenges. A man who says he will sustain the President of the Church or the General Authorities, but cannot sustain his own bishop, is deceiving himself. The man who will not sustain the bishop of his ward and the president of his stake will not sustain the President of the Church. Boyd K. Packer, *Follow the Brethren*, BYU Speeches of the Year, 1965, p. 4-5.)

7 And the Lord God doth work by ^ameans to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by

very ^bsmall means the Lord doth ^cconfound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.

8 And now, it has hitherto been wisdom in God that these things (**scriptures generally**) should be preserved; for behold, ^athey have ^benlarged the memory of this people, yea, and convinced many of the error of their ways, and brought them to the ^cknowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls.

9 Yea, I say unto you, ^awere it not for these things that these records do contain, which are on these plates, Ammon and his brethren could not have ^bconvinced so many thousands of the Lamanites of the incorrect tradition of their fathers; yea, these records and their ^cwords brought them unto repentance; that is, they brought them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and to rejoice in Jesus Christ their Redeemer.

10 And who knoweth but what they will be the ^ameans of bringing many thousands of them, yea, and also many thousands of our ^bstiffnecked brethren, the Nephites, who are now hardening their hearts in sin and iniquities, to the knowledge of their Redeemer?

11 Now these mysteries are not yet fully made known unto me; therefore I shall forbear.

12 And it may suffice if I only say they are preserved for a ^awise purpose, which purpose is known unto God; for he doth ^bcounsel in wisdom over all his works, and his paths are straight, and his course is ^cone eternal round.

13 O remember, remember, my son Helaman, how ^astrict are the commandments of God. And he said: ^bIf ye will keep my commandments ye shall ^cprosper in the land—but if ye keep not his commandments ye shall be cut off from his presence.

14 And now remember, my son, that God has ^aentrusted you with these things, which are ^bsacred, which he has kept sacred, and also which he will keep and ^cpreserve for a ^dwise purpose in him, that he may show forth his power unto future generations.

15 And now behold, I tell you by the spirit of prophecy, that if ye transgress the commandments of God, behold, these things which are sacred shall be taken away from you by the power of God, and ye shall be delivered up unto Satan, that he may sift you as chaff before the wind. (To Joseph Smith who had temporarily lost the favor of God by losing the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript, the Lord said: “Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men; for although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet, if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.” D&C 3:3-4. DCBM, 3:275.)

16 But if ye keep the commandments of God, and do with these things which are sacred according to that which the Lord doth command you, (for you must appeal unto the Lord for all things whatsoever ye must do with them) behold, no power of earth or hell can ^atake them from you, for God is powerful to the fulfilling of all his words.

17 For he will fulfil all his ^apromises which he shall make unto you, for he has fulfilled his promises which he has made unto our fathers.

18 For he promised unto them that he would ^apreserve these things for a wise purpose in him, that he might show forth his power unto future generations.

19 And now behold, one purpose hath he fulfilled, even to the restoration of ^amany thousands of the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth; and he hath shown forth his power in them, and he will also still show forth his power in them unto ^bfuture generations; therefore they shall be preserved.

20 Therefore I command you, my son Helaman, that ye be diligent in fulfilling all my words, and that ye be diligent in keeping the commandments of God as they are written.

21 And now, I will speak unto you concerning those ^atwenty-four plates, that ye keep them, that the ^bmysteries and the works of darkness, and their secret works, or the secret works of those people who have been destroyed, may be made ^cmanifest unto this people; yea, all their murders, and robbings, and their plunderings, and all their wickedness and abominations, may be made manifest unto this people;

yea, and that ye preserve these ^dinterpreters.

22 For behold, the Lord saw that his people began to work in darkness, yea, work secret murders and abominations; therefore the Lord said, if they did not repent they should be destroyed from off the face of the earth.

23 And the Lord said: I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem, (“The word Gazelem appears to have its roots in Gaz - a stone and Aleim, a name of God as a revelator or interposer in the affairs of men. If this suggestion be correct, its roots admirably agree with its apparent meaning-a seer.” (George Reynolds, *A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*, p. 92) This may well be a play on words. Is Gazelem the seer stone or the servant? It is difficult to tell from the passage and depends very much on the placement of a comma in the sentence. Perhaps it could refer to both. It is interesting to note that when Jesus called Simon Peter to the ministry he said: ‘Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a seer, or a stone’ (JST, John 1:42). Though this name or title of Gazelem may be used in regard to any seer who utilizes seer stones, it seems in this instance to be a direct reference to Joseph Smith the Prophet.” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 278) “With reference to the name Gazelam, it is interesting to note that Alma in directing Helaman to preserve both the Urim and Thummim and the plates containing the Book of Ether, says that such record will be brought to light by the Lord's servant Gazelem, who will use ‘a stone’ in his translation work. (Alma 37:21-23.) It may be that Gazelem is a variant spelling of Gazelam and that Alma's reference is to the Prophet Joseph Smith who did in fact bring forth part at least of the Ether record. Or it could be that the name Gazelem (Gazelam) is a title having to do with power to translate ancient records and that Alma's reference was to some Nephite prophet who brought the Book of Ether to light in the golden era of Nephite history.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 307-8)) a ^astone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light, that I may ^bdiscover unto my people who serve me, that I may discover unto them the works of their brethren, yea, their secret works, their works of darkness, and their wickedness and abominations.

24 And now, my son, these ^ainterpreters were prepared that the word of God might be fulfilled, which he spake, saying: (We do not know the source of the following scripture.)

25 I will ^abring forth out of darkness unto light all their secret works and their abominations (Spencer W. Kimball: “My young folks, since the Lord said, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48), it would be well if all of us would take frequent inventory to see if hidden away under the rugs and in the corners of our lives there might be some vestige of hypocrisy and ugliness or error. Or could there be hidden under the blankets of personal excuse and rationalization some small eccentricities and dishonesties? Are there any cobwebs in ceilings and corners which we think will not be noticed? Are we trying to cover up the small pettinesses and the small gratifications we secretly allow ourselves-rationalizing the while that they are insignificant and inconsequential? Are there areas in our thoughts and actions and attitudes which we would like to hide from those we respect most? Are we certain that all of our innermost secrets are kept confidential? The Lord revealed in 1831, ‘The rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed.’ (D&C 1:3.) Would a frequent house cleaning be in order for all of us?” (*BYU Speeches*, February 25, 1964, p. 21)); and except they repent I will ^bdestroy them from off the face of the earth; and I will bring to light all their secrets and abominations, unto every nation that shall hereafter possess the land.

26 And now, my son, we see that they did not repent; therefore they have been destroyed, and thus far the word of God has been fulfilled; yea, their ^asecret abominations have been brought out of darkness and made known unto us.

27 And now, my son, I command you that ye retain all their oaths, and their covenants, and their agreements in their secret abominations; yea, and all their ^asigns and their wonders ye shall ^bkeep from this people, that they know them not, lest peradventure they should fall into darkness also and be destroyed. (Joseph F. Smith: It is not necessary that our young people should know of the wickedness

carried on in anyplace. Such knowledge is not elevating and it is quite likely that more than one young man can trace the first step of his downfall to a curiosity which led him into questionable places. *Gospel Doctrine*, 373-74. Members of the Church [are] not to affiliate in any way with the occult or those mysterious powers it espouses... these things should not be pursued as games, be topics in church meetings, or be delved into in private, personal conversations. *First Presidency Letter, 18 Sep. 1991*. As I have met with many groups of missionaries throughout the mission, I find a tendency for missionaries to tell their faults to their companions, their friends, and sometimes in public. There is no place in the mission field to publicize your weaknesses... There is no reason why you should tell every companion the fact that you might have smoked a few cigarettes in your life before you came, or that you had taken the name of the Lord in vain, or any other of your weaknesses. We go forward on the assumption that you are worthy to do this work. If there is something of major importance in your life that had not been adjusted before your coming into the mission field, then certainly you should make those adjustments through your president. Don't tell the saints. That does not do anyone any good. It does not mean you are being hypocritical. You had some weaknesses, you repented, and those weaknesses are no longer part of your life. *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 96*)

28 For behold, there is a ^acurse upon all this land, that destruction shall come upon all those workers of darkness, according to the power of God, when they are fully ripe; therefore I desire that this people might not be destroyed.

29 Therefore ye shall keep these secret plans of their ^aoaths and their covenants from this people, and only their wickedness and their murders and their abominations shall ye make known unto them; and ye shall teach them to ^babhor such wickedness and abominations and murders; and ye shall also teach them that these people were destroyed on account of their wickedness and abominations and their murders.

30 For behold, they ^amurdered all the prophets of the Lord who came among them to declare unto them concerning their iniquities; and the blood of those whom they murdered did cry unto the Lord their God for vengeance upon those who were their murderers; and thus the judgments of God did come upon these workers of darkness and secret ^bcombinations.

31 Yea, and ^acursed be the land forever and ever unto those workers of darkness and secret combinations, even unto destruction, except they repent before they are fully ^bripe.

32 And now, my son, remember the words which I have spoken unto you; trust not those secret plans unto this people, but **teach them an everlasting ^ahatred against sin and iniquity.** (We must lose every desire for sin. God cannot tolerate sin.)

33 **^aPreach unto them repentance, and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to humble themselves and to be ^bmeek and lowly in heart; teach them to ^cwithstand every ^dtemptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.** (We do not come to resist evil and forsake wickedness through merely gritting our teeth and exercising constant willpower. To be sure, we must do all in our power to hold tightly to the iron rod, but the power to overcome is in and through Jesus Christ. To have faith in Jesus Christ is to trust in him and rely on his holy arm. It is to acknowledge our weakness, our mortality, our frailty, our utter inability to withstand temptations and conquer sin on our own. DCBM, 3:280. The ordinances of the gospel give us power to withstand temptation.)

34 Teach them to never be weary of good works (Neal A. Maxwell: "Paradoxical as it sounds, more diligence actually brings more relief. Any selfishness, on the other hand, magnifies our weariness. Selfishness not only shrinks the quantity of service we render but also provides none of the needed renewal, no 'rest to [our] souls.'" (*If Thou Endure It Well*, p. 113) Henry B. Eyring: "Alma gave his son advice that is good for us. He said: (quotes Alma 37:33-34.) The good works that really matter require the help of heaven. And the help of heaven requires working past the point of fatigue so far that only the meek and lowly will keep going long enough. The Lord doesn't put us through this test just to give us a grade; he does it because the process will change us." (*To Draw Closer to God*, p. 95)), but to be meek and lowly in heart; for such shall find ^arest to their souls.

SCRIPTURE MASTERY **35 O, remember, my son, and ^alearn ^bwisdom in thy ^cyouth; yea, learn**

in thy youth to keep the commandments of God. (Without a strong foundation of the gospel in our youth, it becomes more difficult to keep the commandments later in life. Give me a young man who has kept himself morally clean and has faithfully attended his Church meetings. Give me a young man who has magnified his priesthood and has earned his Duty to God Award and is an Eagle Scout. Give me a young man who is a seminary graduate and has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon. Give me such a young man and I will give you a young man who can perform miracles for the Lord in the mission field and throughout his life. *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, 197.* There is a line of demarcation, well defined, between the Lord's territory and the devil's. if you will stay on the Lord's side of the line, you will be under his influence and will have no desire to do wrong; but if you cross to the devil's side of the line one inch, you are in the tempter's power, and if he is successful, you will not be able to think or even reason properly, because you will have lost the Spirit of the Lord. *George Albert Smith, as quoted in Miracle of Forgiveness, 232.*)

PREACH MY GOSPEL: PRAY WITH FAITH: WHY MUST YOU PRAY FOR THE SPIRIT? 2 Nephi 32:8-9; D&C 42:14; D&C 50:13-22. WHAT SHOULD YOU PRAY FOR? Alma 6:6; Alma 13:28; Alma 34:17-27; Alma 37:36-37; 3 Nephi 18:20; 3 Nephi 18:9; D&C 50:29-30; Bible

Dictionary: "Prayer" ³⁶ Yea, and ^acry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy ^bdoings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy ^cthoughts be directed unto the Lord ("The central thesis of the passage is to see that all of our thoughts and doings are unto the Lord—the exact meaning of the expression 'pray always.' Praying always entails constantly being conscious of God and his plan of salvation. It consists of having a continual attitude which directs us during every waking moment of mortality, of maintaining a spiritual posture of thankfulness and reliance on the Lord, of desiring the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Brigham Young noted that to pray always is to live as we pray: 'I do not know any other way for the Latter-day Saints than for every breath to be virtually a prayer for God to guide and direct his people.... Every breath should virtually be a prayer that God will preserve us from sin and from the effects of sin.'" (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988; 3 Ne 9-30, p. 144) Joseph Smith: "We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the directions of the Book of Mormon, and pray over, and for your families, your cattle, your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in. Be virtuous and pure; be men of integrity and truth; keep the commandments of God; and then you will be able more perfectly to understand the difference between right and wrong—between the things of God and the things of men; and your path will be like that of the just, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." (*History of the Church*, 5:31)); yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever. (All we do should be in the name of the Lord.)

³⁷ ^aCounsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for ^bgood; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the ^cmorning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; (return and report) and if ye do these things (center our lives in the Lord), ye shall be lifted up at the last day. (Direction for parents and teachers: Teach, preach, cry, remember, counsel.)

³⁸ And now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the thing which our fathers call a ball, (Helaman was probably asking, "Where's my Liahona?") or director—or our fathers called it ^aLiahona, which is, being interpreted, a compass ("It is believed by some that the word Liahona means 'To God Is Light'; that is to say, God gives light as does the sun." (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988; 1 Nephi, p. 244)); and the Lord prepared it.

³⁹ And behold, there cannot any man work after the manner of so curious a workmanship. And behold, it was prepared to show unto our fathers the course which they should travel in the wilderness.

⁴⁰ And it did work for them according to their ^afaith in God; therefore, if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles should point the way they should go, behold, it was done; therefore they had this miracle, and also many other miracles wrought by the power of God, day by day.

41 Nevertheless, because those miracles were worked by ^asmall means it did show unto them marvelous works. They were ^bslothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey;

42 Therefore, they tarried in the wilderness, or did ^anot travel a direct course, and were afflicted with hunger and thirst, because of their transgressions.

43 And now, my son, I would that ye should understand that these things are not without a ^ashadow; (Or in other words, these things are not without symbolic meaning.) for as our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass (now these things were temporal) they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual.

44 For behold, it is as easy (Living the gospel and giving heed to the word of Christ are only difficult as we seek to hold on to the trappings of Babylon and pay attention to the enticements of its municipals. DCBM, 3:283) to give heed to the ^aword of Christ, which will point to you a straight course to eternal bliss, as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass, which would point unto them a straight course to the promised land.

45 And now I say, is there not a ^atype in this thing? For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise. (Alma here explains that the Liahona was a type, a shadow, a symbol of Jesus Christ and his word. When a people are faithful, then the words of Christ – given principally through the spirit of prophecy and revelation – lead them forward, like a compass, toward their goal of exaltation and eternal life. DCBM, 3:282)

46 O my son, do not let us be ^aslothful because of the ^beasiness of the ^cway; (Neal A. Maxwell: “Muttering and murmuring are often the expressions of our conscience gone grumpy; it is precisely because we know we need to respond affirmatively (and have some inkling about what’s coming) that we let off steam—we start puffing in advance of the climb. These are reactions genuinely to be avoided, since they can precede the keeping of a commandment or the fulfilling of a task with a slothful heart, which is more serious. Mostly, to avoid muttering, we need to trust more. So many of the things muttered about before turn out to be marvelous experiences later, and we are inwardly, and deservedly, ashamed for having grumbled.” (*Deposition of a Disciple*, p. 31)) for so was it with our fathers; for so was it prepared for them, that if they would ^dlook they might ^elive; even so it is with us. The way is prepared, and if we will look we may live forever.

47 And now, my son, see that ye take ^acare of these sacred things, yea, see that ye ^blook to God and live. Go unto this people and declare the word, and be sober. My son, farewell.

Alma 38

The commandments of Alma to his son Shiblon.

Shiblon was persecuted for righteousness’ sake—Salvation is in Christ, who is the life and the light of the world—Bridle all your passions. [About 73 B.C.]

1 MY ^ason, give ear to my words, for I say unto you, even as I said unto Helaman, that ^binasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ^cinasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be ^dcut off from his ^epresence.

2 And now, my son, I trust that I shall have great joy in you, because of your ^asteadiness and your faithfulness unto God; for as you have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord your God, even so I hope that you will continue in keeping his commandments; for blessed is he that ^bendureth to the end.

3 I say unto you, my son, that I have had great joy in thee already, because of thy faithfulness and thy diligence, and thy patience and thy long-suffering among the people of the ^aZoramites. (President Ezra Taft Benson: Praise your children more than you correct them. Praise them for even their smallest

achievement. Encourage your children to come to you for counsel with their problems and questions by listening to them every day. Discuss with them such important matters as dating, sex, and other matters affecting their growth and development, and do it early enough so they will not obtain information from questionable sources. *Unlocking the Book of Mormon*, 304)

4 For I know that thou wast in bonds; yea, and I also know that thou wast stoned for the word's sake; and thou didst bear all these things with ^apatience because the Lord was ^bwith thee; and now thou knowest that the Lord did deliver thee.

5 And now my son, Shiblon, I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your ^atrust in God even so much ye shall be ^bdelivered out of your trials, and your ^ctroubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day. (John Taylor: "There is not a man upon the earth that has put his trust in God, I do not care what part of the world he has been in, but what can say that he delivered him. I know that has been the case with me, emphatically so. I have been satisfied, when in foreign lands and in strange countries, where I had no access but to the Almighty, that he was on my side, and I know that he has answered my prayers. (*Journal of Discourses*, 8:96, June 17, 1860))

6 Now, my son, I would not that ye should think that I know these things of myself, but it is the Spirit of God which is in me which maketh these things known unto me ("All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit and proper to reveal to us, while we are dwelling in mortality, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract, and independent of affinity of this mortal tabernacle, but *are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all*; and those revelations which will save our spirits will save our bodies." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 355, italics added)); for if I had not been ^aborn of God I should not have known these things.

7 But behold, the Lord in his great mercy sent his ^aangel to declare unto me that I must stop the work of ^bdestruction among his people; yea, and I have seen an angel face to face, and he spake with me, and his voice was as thunder, and it shook the whole earth.

8 And it came to pass that I was ^athree days and three nights in the most bitter ^bpain and ^canguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a ^dremission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.

9 And now, my son, I have told you this that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn of me that there is ^ano other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold, he is the life and the ^blight of the world. Behold, he is the word of truth and ^crighteousness.

10 And now, as ye have begun to teach the word even so I would that ye should continue to teach; and I would that ye would be diligent and ^atemperate in all things. ("The temperance spoken of here is that of restraint and moderation, particularly in that which we say and teach. For example, it is unwise to use stories, quotations, or information that we cannot verify. Temperance is especially important if the story is of a sensational nature or involves someone of high standing in the Church. Wise teachers will confine themselves to that which they understand, or that for which they are reliable witnesses. Exaggerations, stretching of the truth, and embellished stories and quotations bring no dignity to the gospel or to the teacher. Indeed, such practices are offensive to the Spirit." (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 286))

11 See that ye are not lifted up unto pride; yea, see that ye do not ^aboast in your own wisdom, nor of your much strength.

12 Use ^aboldness, but not overbearance (Spencer W. Kimball: "Sometimes we forget that it is better to risk a little ruffling in the relationship of a friend than it is to deprive them of eternal life by leaving them silent. Besides, our missionaries generally follow the counsel in the Book of Mormon: 'Use boldness, but not overbearance.' (Alma 38:12.); and also see that ye ^bbridle all your passions (Boyd K. Packer: "A bridle is used to guide, to direct. Our passion is to be controlled-but not controlled by extermination, as with a plague of insects; not controlled by eradication, as with a disease. It is to be controlled as electricity is controlled, to generate power and life. When lawfully used, the power of procreation will bless and it will sanctify (see Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret

Book Co., 1977], p. 309).” (*The Things of the Soul*, p. 109) Bruce R. McConkie: “The Lord has placed in our bodies certain passions and certain appetites; perhaps the strongest of these deal with what we call the sex urges. Now if we walk in an unbridled manner, after the way of the world, and are immoral and lascivious and unclean, then we are reveling in the basest sort of carnal existence. But if, on the other hand, we have the strength of character and the fortitude and ability to stand up like men and bridle our passions and control our lusts and use the sex urges in the manner in which the Lord has ordained that they should be used -- which is wholesome and pure and right -- if we walk without any form of sex immorality, then we are rising above the animal plane, and we are walking in the realm of spiritual things.” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1958, p. 70) Truman G. Madsen: What is a bridle for? To kill, to diminish, or even to limit the spirit and power of the steed? Never. Once you have trained your pony you can direct him with the merest nudge. Eventually you can “give him his head” and ride free, bareback like the wind. We are given our bodies and our emotions not to destroy but to ride. The bridle warns you that to get excited without listening to the voice of the Spirit (the rider) will bring a complaint, “hey wait for me!” When the body is susceptible to the Spirit, it can always catch up to the Spirit. But I defy anyone to get the Spirit in harmony with the runaway body. (*Four Essays on Love*, 36), that ye may be filled with love (bridling our passions fills us with love); see that ye refrain from idleness.

13 Do not ^apray as the Zoramites do, for ye have seen that they pray to be heard of men, and to be praised for their wisdom.

14 Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are ^abetter than our brethren; but rather say: O Lord, forgive my ^bunworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy—yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times. (Though there are those sins which of necessity must be confessed to the appropriate ecclesiastical officer, the instruction to Shiblon, a man of righteousness, falls in the category of petty faults with which the judges in Israel need not be troubled. Forgiveness may need to be sought from the offended party, and always from God, to whom all that is unrighteous or improper is an offense. DCBM, 3:287)

15 And may the Lord bless your soul, and receive you at the last day into his kingdom, to sit down in peace. Now go, my son, and teach the word unto this people. Be ^asober. My son, farewell.